

Awareness Act of 2017, which requires the Surgeon General to report to Congress on the public health effects of the increased use since January 2010 by individuals who are 12 to 18 years old of drugs developed and manufactured to avoid control under the Controlled Substances Act.

The term synthetic drug means a drug which is developed and manufactured to avoid control under the Controlled Substances Act.

There are more than 200 identified synthetic drug compounds and more than 90 different synthetic drug marijuana compounds.

Many of these synthetic drugs are made in foreign countries and then smuggled into the United States.

These clandestinely-made drugs have no manufacturing safety standards that are normally required by the Food and Drug Administration.

Synthetic opioids have surpassed prescription opioids as the most common drug class involved in overdose deaths in the United States.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, fentanyl-related deaths nationwide are up from previous years by 73 percent.

Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid created using man-made chemical components rather than naturally occurring ingredients, is 50–100 times more potent than morphine.

Overall, drug overdose deaths involving fentanyl-type drugs in the United States rose from about 3,000 in 2010 to more than 19,400 in 2016.

The rate of teen drug overdose deaths in the United States climbed 19 percent from 2014 to 2015, from 3.1 deaths per 100,000 teens to 3.7 per 100,000.

The number of American teens to die of a drug overdose leapt by almost a fifth in 2015 after seven years of decline.

The opioid epidemic claimed more than 52,000 lives in 2015.

In Texas, Synthetic opioids account for almost one-fifth of drug related overdoses.

In 2016, there were 1,375 opioid-related overdose deaths in Texas specifically, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Last year, 364 drug-related overdose deaths happened in Houston.

Synthetic marijuana, methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin top the list of drug-related problems in the Houston area.

Geographically, death rates from overdoses involving synthetic opioids increased in 21 states, with 10 states doubling their rates from 2016 to 2017.

No area of the United States is exempt from this epidemic—we all know a friend, family member or loved one devastated by opioids.

H.R. 449 is a positive step in the right direction, I urge my colleagues to vote Yes on H.R. 449, the Synthetic Drug Awareness Act of 2017.

CONGRATULATING GARY LEE ON WINNING THE ADIRONDACK COUNCIL'S SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 6, 2018

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate retired Forest Ranger

Gary Lee on winning the Adirondack Council's Special Recognition Award.

The Adirondack Council's Special Recognition Award acknowledges an individual for contributions to the Council's mission of ensuring ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park. This year's winner, Gary Lee, has dedicated over 30 years of his life to wildlife conservation in the North Country. As a New York State Forest Ranger, Gary worked at the West Canada Lakes Wilderness and Moose River Plains Wild Forest. His achievements include producing the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas and banding birds on Four Brothers Island in Lake Champlain as well as at the Crown Point Bird Banding Station. Through his passion for birdwatching, photography, and writing, as well as his extensive knowledge of Adirondack wildlife, Gary has been instrumental in preserving our natural places and natural species of the Adirondacks.

On behalf of New York's 21st District, I would like to congratulate Gary on his well-deserved award, and thank him for his continued commitment to protecting the Adirondack Park, its natural resources, and its native species.

CONGRATULATING MICHAEL
EHRlich ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 6, 2018

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Mr. Michael L. Ehrlich on the occasion of his retirement from the Fairfax County Public School System following an exceptional 30-year career in education. I thank him for his life-long dedication to fine arts education and to thousands of music students in Northern Virginia.

Michael Ehrlich was born and raised in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. While in high school, he was an active member of the band and choral programs. Upon graduation in 1974, Michael spent two years as a saxophonist with the Air Force Band of the East stationed at McGuire AFB, New Jersey. In 1977, he began his college career at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana and received his degree in music and theatre in 1981. He then returned to Pennsylvania where he taught private saxophone and voice lessons. He also performed in and directed musical theatre for community theatre groups in the area. In 1983, Michael moved to Northern Virginia and established the foundation of his musical career here, teaching private saxophone and voice lessons and performing in and directing musical theater for several local community theater groups.

Michael accepted a teaching position at W.T. Woodson High School in 1988. At that time, only 30 students were participating in the choral program.

During his 30-year tenure, Michael expanded the program, which now includes 250 students in six different choirs.

Under his leadership, the W.T. Woodson High School choirs have consistently received superior ratings at the Virginia Music Educators Association (VMEA) choral festival, and

have been invited to perform at many other venues and conventions. The Select Women's Ensemble performed for the VMEA convention in 1993, 1999, and 2014 as well as for the Southern Division, American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) convention in 1998, 2006, and 2012.

The Select Vocal Ensemble was a winner of the WGMS classical radio station/GEICO Young Artists in the Community contest and was honored to perform at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theatre Millennium Stage and at the Concert Hall. In the summers of 1999, 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2015, a group of select singers traveled to Europe and performed at venues in Austria, Switzerland, Italy, and France. Highlights of the tour included a singing mass at Notre Dame and also a performance at a wreath-laying ceremony at the American Cemetery in Normandy, France. In addition to his work with the choral groups, Michael was also the vocal director and pit orchestra conductor for W.T. Woodson High School's musical theater performances.

Michael's dedication and commitment to this craft and to his students has been recognized locally and nationally, along with his influence on music education. Michael is listed in the Who's Who Among American Teachers, was nominated for Fairfax County Teacher of the Year, and was named a USA Today—All USA Teacher. He was also a recipient of the 2004–2005 Wolf Trap Performing Arts Center Scholarship for Teachers and was inducted into the East Stroudsburg High School Music Hall of Fame. In addition, Michael received the Sydney Swiggett award and was the inaugural recipient of the W.T. Woodson Parent Teacher Student Organization's Teacher of the Year award.

Perhaps most importantly, Michael is an educator who is beloved by his students, their parents and his colleagues, myself among them. Michael was my daughter Caitlin's chorus teacher during her time at W.T. Woodson High School and our family remembers that time with warm appreciation. His joy in sharing his passion for music with his students is contagious and inspires them to strive for excellence not only in their choral performances, but in all aspects of their lives.

As a lifetime supporter of the arts, I believe that fine arts education is critical to the emotional and intellectual development of our youth and our society as a whole. Michael has dedicated his life to this principle and the lives of countless young people and their families have been improved and enriched as a result of his commitment.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating my friend Michael Ehrlich on his retirement and in wishing him great success in his future endeavors. Although he may be officially stepping away from high school music education, I have no doubt that he will continue to advocate for the arts and for the joy they bring to our lives. On behalf of the 11th Congressional District of Virginia and on behalf of my family, I thank him for his service to our community and for his steadfast dedication to the promotion of fine arts and to the education of our youth. I wish him all the best in his retirement.